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A FOREIGN VIEW OF THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST PREPAREDNESS IN THE UNITED STATES

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The first point which generally strikes an unbiased foreigner in the present discussion about Preparedness is that the adversaries of increased armaments claim that no sentiment favorable to the latter seems to exist "outside what is known to have been manufactured by the Navy League. . . ." Now, to the European who, devoid of prejudices, has taken the trouble of questioning people in different walks of life, or of simply listening to conversations, things do not present themselves at all in this light. It has been said that clergymen and educators are almost unanimously adverse to preparation for war. Yet, a poll taken on preparedness among Presbyterian clergymen by a Chicago magazine showed 270 favoring larger armaments, and only 50 opposed to it; on the other hand, an inquiry made by *The World* last December proved that former Presidents of the United States, governors, university presidents, and leading business men of this country were unanimous in the opinion that preparedness should be dealt with by the Congress "immediately, without regard to politics." To a foreign military observer, the growing popularity of summer camps for students and business men, and the steady increase in the membership of the National Guard, are the best signs of a change for the better in public opinion in respect to matters of national defence.

The arguments against preparedness can be roughly divided into two classes: those dealing with generalities, those referring to specific points. Among the former, we find humanitarian or religious considerations.

The Arguments against Preparedness Answered

War is Incompatible with the Teaching of Christianity. First it is to be noted that clergymen do not agree on this subject. Canon Morley very aptly asserts that "in the act of recognizing and

including within herself nations, the Christian Church necessarily also admitted war within her pale." "*Peace at any price* is certainly not a maxim of heavenly origin" declares Rev. Stone Hubbell. Second, one may find in Christianity a justification for preparedness, because inadequate preparation causes needless suffering to the sick, the wounded *and all men who have not received a sufficient training for the hardships of war.*

The Very Barbarity of War Makes it Unjustifiable. Undoubtedly, war is one of the greatest evils that can befall mankind. Yet the world's history teaches us that often war has been a necessary evil. Suppose the American Colonies had not fought England. Suppose, in 1861, the North had meekly submitted to have the Union destroyed. Suppose the Cubans had not shaken off the Spanish yoke. Does Mr. Bryan—or Mr. Ford—really believe that the Boers, the Servians, the Belgians ought to have yielded to the request of the stronger countries which had invaded their territory, and contented themselves with declaring that they were "too proud to fight"?

Whether War has its Usefulness or not, it is Bound to Disappear within a Short Time: Therefore, it is Useless to Increase Armaments. Unfortunately, pacifists do not give us any facts; they remain within the scope of hopes and expectations, and these are based as a rule, upon the Hague Court of Arbitration. But it is a sad truth that the success of the latter has so far been dubious. None of the serious conflicts that have arisen since the Court was established has been settled by arbitration. Some adversaries of preparedness think that a readjustment of militarism will be, so to speak, the natural outcome of the present war. This is a highly desirable, yet an impossible occurrence. Should the war end in a draw, each side will strive to get strong enough to renew the fight as soon as possible. If one side wins, the victor will not, himself, reduce considerably his military establishment, for in the latter lies his only guarantee that his terms will be complied with. Moreover the vanquished will never be prevented from cherishing the hope of a revenge. What nation was ever so crushed that it gave up that hope? It is extremely easy for the American pacifist to say to the belligerents: "I think I am getting tired of this war, and of all wars in general. Kindly stop that troublesome fighting; cease that slaughter that nauseates me, and shocks my

nerves. Disarm, all of you, and live in peace for ever more!" This very same philanthropist would think it a bad joke, or an insult if, after being kicked into the gutter by a bully, he was told by a bystander: "My friend, for the sake of universal harmony, shake hands with the other fellow, then go home, and forget all about it." It is customary for people who are not conversant with military institutions to trust in the exhaustion of the now warring armies to further the endeavors of those who seek universal and everlasting peace. This is a gross mistake. Armies recuperate in a wonderfully short time. Instances of this are numerous in military history: the best known are those of the Prussian army after Jena, of the French army after the campaigns of 1812 and 1870-71.

A Strong Military Establishment Fosters the Development of a War Caste, Liable to Endanger Peace. Now, it jumps to the eyes that the value of this argument is in direct ratio to the degree of militarism of the nation to which it applies. In America, people seem to confound military preparedness, or even military spirit with *militarism*. General Wille, commander of the Swiss army, remarked lately that there is nothing incongruous in having compulsory service in a country based on democratic principles. In fact, real militarism exists nowhere, except in Germany, and, to some extent, in Russia. France and the nations with an efficient militia system, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, are not infected with militarism: *is the United States so little democratic that she should dread what causes no fear in those countries?*

Preparedness Adds Cubits to the Stature of All Mischief-Makers in the Land. If we understand this well, pacifists fear that a greater state of preparation would render this nation aggressive. The history of the United States shows plainly that when the country at large wishes to avoid war, no amount of clamoring by the "yellow press" or ordinary scaremongers is heeded by the Congress or the Cabinet. On the other hand, whenever public opinion expresses itself forcibly in favor of war, war is liable to break out in spite of the wishes of the government. It would be as impossible to create *now* an overwhelming current of opinion for a break with Germany or even Mexico, as it was to stop it in 1812 and 1898 when it manifested itself against England and Spain. The record of this country's dealings with Hawaii, Porto Rico, the

Philippines, Colombia, not to speak of older facts like the appropriation of Texas and California, is pretty good for a nation which has never been prepared for war. From this, one may draw the conclusion that *a state of unpreparedness does not preclude aggressiveness.*

Pacifists sometimes present this argument in a different way: **The Real Mischief-Makers Are the War Traders and Stockholders in the Large Armament Firms.** Could the influence of these men become as powerful as it is depicted by anti-militarists? This appears to be practically impossible if this nation adopts only a policy of *reasonable preparedness*. Switzerland has reached a very good state of military preparation; so did Sweden: yet, there is no record, in these countries, of a condition of affairs like that pointed out, in Germany, by Karl Liebknecht, and in England by George H. Perris. Moreover if it be true that federal arsenals can produce war supplies at about half the price asked by private factories, why should not the government undertake the whole fabrication of guns, ammunitions, and equipment of all kinds? This would be both an economy, and a guarantee against the activities of war traders.

Any Increase in Preparedness Paves the Way to an Economical Situation that may Prove Extremely Onerous to the Taxpayer. Any sane man deplores that money should be used in destructive instead of constructive pursuits. However, one must also think of what any war would cost *if the country were not prepared.* It should be borne in mind, besides, that what is asked for the United States is only *a reasonable degree of preparedness.* Now, if one thinks of the reckless expenditure and the graft so frequently reported in other undertakings, one is bound to wonder at the ado made by pacifists when the military budget is concerned. They show, as "horrible examples," the tremendous military expenditures of the great European powers: did they ever realize that a single corporation president, here, is sometimes paid as much as ten or twelve French major-generals? That one opera singer, in one evening, receives what two Russian lieutenant-generals get in a year? That a certain sheriff of New York County costs to the taxpayers just as much as 38 colonels cost the Italian people?

The Present War Shows the Fallacy of The Theory that to Preserve Peace One Must Prepare for War. Therefore, a Greater

State of Preparedness is Useless to Us as a Protection Against War.

To a European, the theory alluded to ceased to have any serious meaning, not in 1914, but many years ago, *as regards great military powers*. But, *in as far as other nations are concerned*, preparedness MAY be a good guarantee of peace—however paradoxical this seems. Pacifists scoff at the Swiss preparedness which, they say, could not prevent that nation from becoming the prey of one of the great powers. Undoubtedly the two or three hundred thousand Swiss militiamen would be unable to beat off Germany, France or Austria, if any of these countries should deem it of *vital importance* to occupy the territory of the Confederation. The question is: is it possible that circumstances should ever be such that adequate preparation for war should be of any value to Switzerland? To this one can emphatically answer: Yes. A mere glance at Swiss history discloses that fact that, on no less than four occasions, that little country, which had been sensible enough to organize very efficiently its citizen soldiery, induced much more powerful nations to come to terms without a fight, or to refrain from intervention in the affairs of the Confederation. These events happened in 1838, 1846, 1857 and 1870. In none of these instances, an invasion of Switzerland was of vital import to the great powers; but they would have invaded the Swiss territory, had not the Confederation been in such a state of preparedness that Prussia, like France, thought *the play was not worth the candle*. That is exactly where lies the core of the matter: *a stronger nation will not molest a weaker one when the latter is in a sufficient state of preparation to cause the former to believe that it is not worth while to fight*. It should not be forgotten that there has been a time when, in the United States, military preparedness avoided a rupture with a great military nation. This was in 1865, at the close of the Civil War. The occupation of Mexico by the French was contrary to the Monroe Doctrine. The United States asked Napoleon to withdraw his forces; her demand was backed by a well trained army. The French Emperor did not think it *worth while* to maintain his stand, and he evacuated Mexico.

War Preparedness May Lead to Ruin. A well known university president asserts that "Our people can have war with somebody or almost anybody in due time and on some excuse if they want to go to the trouble and expense to prepare for it." We are told that the European countries, which have on so elaborate a scale prepared

for war, have gotten exactly what they prepared for. This is by no means true of all these countries. France, Belgium, England did not want war. What would have happened to France had she not been prepared for the struggle? The Germans would have crushed her long ago: Would such solution benefit the cause of the pacifists? The latter ask us to look at China, and, in the wrong which Christian nations have perpetrated upon her, to behold one of the greatest perils of preparedness. What we cannot fail to see is that China was pounced upon, just because she was not prepared to fight. Pacifists claim that the United States was shoved headlong into war with Spain because she had a navy that outranked the Spanish navy. Such is not, by any means, the opinion of the majority of American or foreign diplomats, statesmen or military experts. The intervention in Cuba was required by public opinion, business interests being linked with sentimental considerations on that subject. The Maine incident would have made war unavoidable, under the circumstances, even if the navy had not been prepared. A situation exactly similar was that in 1812 when Congress declared war on Great Britain despite the fact that it was obvious that the United States was not ready to engage in such an undertaking. In fact, the campaign of 1898 ought to be a lesson to pacifists; the blatant inefficiency of the militia system, the numberless blunders of the Quartermaster Department, the useless loss of life in the fever camps in the South have made this war, in the military colleges of Europe, a classical example of the evils and dangers of the lack of preparedness. Regarding Japan, it is stated that "the Jingo in Nippon has no difficulty in making a good cause against the United States" who planted her guns "under Japan's window." In answer to this it may be stated that if Japanese statemen or politicians are disturbed at the thought that the United States is increasing her armaments, then it is a safe assumption that the Nippons have planned some warlike scheme against America, and the latter is quite justified therefore in getting ready for a possible rupture with that nation.

Preparedness is a Reversal of the National Policy of the United States. Pacifists, and especially Mr. Bryan, deplore the fact that this country should abandon the hope, "so long cherished," of being an example to Europe. Truth is sometimes unpleasant to hear, but we must state here that Europeans do not see

at all why America should set herself as a model for them to admire and copy. In the dealings of the United States with Mexico in 1846, with Hawaii, Porto Rico, the Philippines, Colombia, there is nothing for Europe to learn, because these dealings were simply forms of aggressiveness—hardly consistent with Mr. Bryan's assertions. One may go one step further and affirm, without the slightest hesitation, that there are many things the United States could and should copy, not from German militarism, but from military institutions of Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and even France. Lack of discipline, of self control and respect for established authority have brought about, in America, a condition of affairs which is nothing short of shameful, and which has been strongly denounced by the best educators or public spirited writers in this land. Some of the latter, indeed, have gone so far as to advocate a short compulsory service to check "the spread of a virulent form of moral disease."

The Isolation of the United States not only Renders any War Unlikely, but will give Her Ample Time to get Ready, Should War Become Unavoidable. The man who, in this country, opposes preparedness on the ground that there is no enemy in sight, resembles the house owner who would decline to take out an insurance policy, saying: "My mansion is not exactly fireproof, I know, but I am very careful about fire. Besides I have decent neighbors on two sides of my property, and there are ponds on the other sides. I am not going to burn down!" It is certain that such view would be deplored by all his friends, for how can he feel safe against the work of tramps or incendiaries, sparks from somebody else's chimney, lightning and even an accident caused by himself in a minute of thoughtlessness? It is not inconsistent to hope in the formation of the United States of the world, and to get ready to resist attacks from nations which maintain a warlike attitude. But let us deal with plain historical facts. If the United States is free from the disturbing influences that have created unrest in Europe for so long a time, there must have been other factors somewhat troublesome on this side of the Atlantic for, as ex-Secretary Garrison remarked, *the country has averaged a war or a fight of some kind once in every seven years*, and the army has been used at least one hundred times to repel invasion, put down insurrections, etc. Ex-Secretary Bryan said once: "The President knows

that if this country needed a million men and needed them in a day, the call could go out at sunrise, and the sun would go down on a million men in arms." It might be possible to get these men in a day, but they would be *men in arms*, not soldiers. Nobody doubts the valor of the American volunteer; however, nowadays, less than at any period of military history, personal heroism cannot hope to win in war. In the older times, a general who had suffered losses of 10 per cent with ordinary troops and 25 per cent with veterans, could be justified in thinking of retreat. In the present conflict, the Allies' infantry held its ground after losing 60 per cent and, in a few cases, 70 per cent of the effective force. Not only would it be foolish to rely on made-over-night regiments to fight any foreign regular army, but this would be criminal towards these raw recruits, unable to withstand the fatigue and the moral strain of military operations.

Lastly, it would be interesting to know how persons who believe in over-night-preparedness expect to provide their men with arms and ammunition, if no adequate provision is made for this in time of peace. In modern warfare, half a million shells are sometimes fired in one day. Are shells and cartridges and guns to be manufactured, also, overnight?

It is Practically Impossible for a Foreign Foe to Overcome the Coast Defenses or to Land Troops on the Shore of the United States. It must be admitted that fleets usually prove ineffective against coast defenses. But, should hostile battleships succeed in coming near the coasts, it is highly improbable that they would waste valuable ammunition by trying to make a few holes in the batteries or to kill a score or two of coast artillerymen. *They would rather devote their fire to the hitting of the city protected by the forts; and this could be done effectively, by a daring fleet, even within the range of the defense's guns.* As regards landings, the only point at issue is: can a foreign army be transported across the seas to this country? There is no good reason why it could not. One hundred and twenty thousand men, during the present war, have been conveyed from Canada to England without a hitch. German officers have repeatedly stated that, under favorable circumstances, four army corps could be sent to America. All this, of course, could be done only if the United States fleet had been destroyed or much weakened by losses or *some strategical diversion*—three possible

contingencies, *for the American navy is at present only the third, if not the fourth, in the world.* Be it as it may, it does not seem worth while to devote much time to the discussion of *direct transportation* of a landing army to the United States. England, possessing Canada, would not need to land troops on American soil. In respect to other possible foes, it is obvious that the greatest danger of war, for the United States, lies in questions pertaining to the Monroe Doctrine or to her insular possessions. Should Germany, for instance, decide to establish herself forcibly in South America, the theatre of operations would be *there on land*, after the Empire had, more or less leisurely, transported its troops to that region, previous to a rupture with the United States. This is a contingency which no American should fail to have in mind in the discussion about preparedness.

If One Takes, One by One, the Leading Military Powers of Europe or Asia, also Canada and Mexico, it is Impossible to Find a Reason Why any of Them Should Ever Fight This Country.

1. *Canada.* The assertion that "business interests of the two countries are so interwoven as to preclude a rupture between them" is not convincing. Under any circumstances, the Dominion would be loyal to England, so much the more so *because there is no particularly friendly feeling there towards the United States.* It is very easy for a European to ascertain this fact just now!

2. *Mexico.* It is hardly worth while observing that he who feels sure that the United States will never have a war against that nation is assuming a great deal. One should not lose sight of the fact that the government at Washington has pledged itself to see that European interests in Mexico shall be protected. The time may come, sooner than pacifists think, when it will have to act otherwise than by way of a half hearted chase for a bandit.

3. *Japan.* It must be remarked, first, that even those who think war with Japan is "impossible," admit, generally, that there are causes of disaffection on the part of the Japanese, which might tend to disturb the "course of friendship." It matters little whether Japan declares war, or whether the latter is forced upon the United States government by public opinion. Japan, it is contended, owes too much to this country to ever want to fight it. The world's history is made up of palinodes and ingratitude. We see at present Bulgaria fighting Russia, her godmother; the Turk

opposing the French, his ally of 1856; the Boers aiding England against Germany whose moral support they enjoyed in 1900,—and so forth.

4. *England.* Here again we find the old set of arguments: sentimental, commercial, financial considerations uniting in making any future war impossible. Now, the extreme friendliness of English people towards their American cousins did not prevent these nations from waging one against the other *two wars*, lasting respectively eight and two and one-half years. The good feeling, towards America, of British workingmen during the Civil War is not to be denied. However, the Trent Affair does not give the impression that the English government was kindly disposed towards the United States. It is still considered today one of the most serious difficulties that ever arose between the two countries. The Venezuela incident was another proof that, when national interests are at stake, close relationship has no longer much value. Can we be sure that there will never be, at any future time, some other Trent or Venezuela affairs, and that public opinion, at least on this side of the Atlantic, will not be roused to the "breaking point"?

5. *Germany.* The argument based on the belief that Germany would not fight the United States because she had too much money invested in this country need not be considered. A similar situation existed between England and Germany, and Germany and Russia, and did not prevent the present conflict. Nor should one pay much attention to the consideration that several millions of inhabitants of the United States are of German origin. This situation might handicap America; it would be very favorable to Germany in case of war. We all know, by this time, how much that part of the population is able to accomplish, in many ways, to help the old Vaterland. Opponents of preparedness ridicule the contention that Germany, if victorious, will need territory in South America or elsewhere; and that, if vanquished, she may be prone to "steal American money," in order to recuperate. However, there is no telling what a nation which considers treaties mere scraps of paper could do in respect to American wealth in case of need. This is admitted by as peaceful a man as ex-President Taft. But let us look more closely into the matter. Germany may win. It is well known that victorious nations generally become overbearing

and arrogant. The attitude of Germany in 1870 was the outcome of the crushing down of Austria in 1866. In 1871, Germany was eager to pick a quarrel with Switzerland about some trifles. In 1875, she was equally anxious to attack France while the morale of the German army was still high, and its confidence complete in the officers, veterans of 1870. Should Germany be vanquished, it is logical that, having her activity curtailed in Europe, she should turn to another field of action, perhaps South America, which has been for a long time so alluring to her. Against this, the other great powers would certainly not raise one finger. A European political writer of much ability and keen judgment, Mr. Joseph Reinach, said, in *Le Figaro*:

The more one reflects, the more one is convinced that the economic and political absorption of America is one of the greatest secrets of the Germanic Empire, and, that consequently nothing is more inevitable than an eventual conflict between Germany and the United States. . . . It is for America to decide whether to let Germany choose the hour or choose it herself.

Moreover, there have been already acts on the part of the Germans which leave no doubt about the intention of that nation to get a foothold in South America. Do we need to recall the Teutonic activities in Venezuela and Brazil as early as 1880, in Venezuela again in 1901, in the Ecuador two or three years ago? It is absolutely beyond doubt that, towards 1913, a very active propaganda was conducted in Central and South America by persons acting under instructions from Berlin. A large number of pamphlets and much literature of all kinds were distributed among residents in Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, and other republics. These pamphlets contain quotations from German writers such as Sievers, Funke, von Liebert, from Lang's book *Reines Deutschtum*, and Dr. Tannenberg's *Gross Deutschland*. They are very suggestive, as may be judged from the following extracts:

Rio Grande del Sul ought to be converted into a territory held by German capital and immigration. The historical precedent and the force are with us, and none can oppose us as long as we decide not to be weakened by inopportune political aspirations. . . .

. . . . The States divided among themselves like the Republic of Argentina, Brazil and all those begging republics of South America must be made by soft ways or by force to listen to our words.

Let us now ask the pacifists a question or two. Have they cognizance of the German Federal Law of July 22, 1913, which makes it impossible for a German to be other than a subject of the German

Empire, and always subject to military service in Germany? Is it necessary to recall the fact that this amendment to the old naturalization law of Germany (June 1, 1870) *applies to Germans residing and naturalized in the United States*? But, outside of these considerations, there are things that we would like to see explained by pacifists, from their own standpoint. If Germany entertains no thoughts of ever fighting this country, why has she organized such an extensive system of spying all over the land? Why did her army officers come over, as simple tourists, to study the American means of communication between the interior and the Atlantic seaboard? Why do so many Teutonic writers indulge in publishing books and articles drawing more or less fanciful pictures of the conquest of the United States by Germany? An undeniable fact is that German hostility has showed itself otherwise than in literary essays. That feeling manifested itself almost violently in Manila in 1898; the intrigues of Germany at the occasion of the St. Thomas purchase are an open secret. The tone of the German press as regards the administration's policy with Mexico has been unceasingly unfriendly—nay, even insulting.

Before concluding this paper, we must briefly examine the assertion of persons who, although recognizing the need of better preparedness, believe that **It is Sufficient for the Federal Government to give more Encouragement to the Militia and to Make Some Provision for a Speedy Organization of Volunteers in Case of War.** It is customary for these persons to lay great stress on the prowess of armies organized like those of the Boers, the Vendéans of the French Revolution, and the Tyrolese of Andreas Hofer in 1809. But, notwithstanding the good marksmanship of the Boers, nothing could make up for their lack of military organization, instruction and *discipline*. The same is true of Vendéans and Tyrolese; besides, they were fanatics, marching under generals who were born leaders of men. All were ultimately conquered by soldiers regularly trained, under competent officers. These facts are well known; yet five persons perhaps out of ten, in this country, are still under what we could call "the delusion of the Civil War." They have in mind the wonderful achievements of Grant and Sherman. They have lost sight of the cold truth that the troops who compelled Lee to surrender at Appomattox Court House were as different from the men of Bull Run as a soldier of the German Guard is now from the rawest militiaman of the United States.